

# PUDDLETOWN PUBLISHING MAKES A splash



Renee LaChance and Susan Landis-Steward, members of Clackamas Community College's club, Chrysalis Women Writers, started the locally based Puddletown Publishing Company earlier this year.

By Mandie Gavitt  
Associate Arts & Culture Editor

Those wishing to publish an e-book may have a new avenue to do so thanks to members of Clackamas Community College's Chrysalis writing club. Renee LaChance and Susan Landis-Steward started Puddletown Publishing Company with the first set of books published on March 21 of this year. The company is local and based in Beavercreek.

According to Lisa Nowak, who is involved with the Chrysalis club, the idea to start a publishing company came out during a party the club was hosting on Jan. 2. After the idea was formed those wanting to be involved hurried to get started. Landis-Steward had previous publishing experience which helped to get the company going.

Nowak said that there is no initial charge for writers wishing to publish through Puddletown, though Puddletown does keep a percentage of royalties.

The first books to be published were from four Chrysalis writers: Landis-Steward, Alice Lynn, Roxanna Mathews and Pat Lichen.

Lynn's novel, "Volunteer For Glory" is a Civil War romance story. For Lynn, it was interesting time to have her novel published as the 150th anniversary of the Civil War's beginning is on April 14. She currently runs a blog that is counting down to the anniversary.

"It's been a fast ride," said Lynn. "They hit the ground running."

Lichen, who writes about nature in the Pacific Northwest, said that Puddletown opened up an opportunity for her that she may not have

otherwise had. "Most of my life I've been told that I need to get a publisher in New York City, and they don't have much interest in the Pacific Northwest," she said.

Lichen was asked to publish through Puddletown, as she had an already finished novel ("Kidnapping the Lorax") that she hadn't published. "It wasn't hard to say yes. I wasn't doing anything else with the book," she said.

Since publishing through Puddletown, Lichen has heard from readers in Ohio and New York City. "That's pretty exciting and vindicating," she said. Although Lichen has heard back from readers in New York she claims she no longer has interest in traditional publishing and wants to stick to publishing through Puddletown.

"Right now is such an interesting time for publishers and writers. Everything is up in the air and changing. It is an interesting time to be in the industry," she said.

The books published through Puddletown and the topics and genres covered are varied. The authors have written about a number of topics including magic, nature and history. Puddletown does not stick to one genre or idea.

Just like with any other publishing company, there is a process before any novels are published through Puddletown. Novels submitted to be published through Puddletown go through various readers before they are published. Readers check for market value. Also, anything that needs to be fact-checked, such as historical information, is verified. Novels are also checked for proper grammar.

For more information on Puddletown you can visit their website: [puddletowngroup.com](http://puddletowngroup.com).

## Are you ready to graduate? Well, are ya, punk?

By Joshua Baird  
Arts & Culture Editor

College is a time for experimentation; a place to discover who you are and what you will be when you "grow up." It isn't, however, a time for reinventing that perfectly shaped thing called the wheel.

In this case that means that you should be focusing on studying for your tests and exams, not studying the school's program trying to decide which classes you are going to take in hopes that you will end up choosing the correct areas of academia for when you transfer off to a four-year university.

As a way to determine whether you are actually ready to graduate with your associates degree or move on to a four-year degree, you can go to myClackamas and do an academic evaluation.

"We always encourage students to turn in a petition for graduation two terms prior to their anticipated term of completion," said Lori Eckhout, one of the academic evaluators at Clackamas Community College.

As far as most students are concerned, applying for graduation isn't something that is required, in fact it isn't even something that crosses most students' minds.

"What happens sometimes is a student thinks they are close to graduating

and maybe a class they thought would count is not going to count. ... So that gives them a good chance to get credits or get some substitutions if needed," said Eckhout.

Many students wonder if they are taking the right courses and all of the links to determine if your classes will transfer are all available on myClackamas.

"We've put the links together so it's easier to find," said Jessica Walters, a CCC counselor.

If you know for sure where you are going, go to that school and talk to them and see what other classes you can take here at Clackamas that will apply toward your degree. It is a good idea to check into the program at your future school.

"What I encourage students to do is go to the school where they are wanting to transfer to and check with them to make sure the classes they (have) are needed for that degree," said Eckhout.

Many students also are unclear on how to transfer credits.

"You can just print it out (from myClackamas), or you can talk to one of the counselors and they can help you out (with) transferring it to your new college," said Karina Dzhyga, a current CCC student planning to transfer to Indiana.

This is only partially accurate; if you are going to use myClackamas you need to fill out a form to request an official

transcript, as simply printing out a copy of your unofficial transcript generally is not accepted by institutions of higher learning.

One thing that may leave you wondering is the case with challenging classes. These count towards a degree but only second-year courses.

"If you challenge Spanish 201 it would show up on your transcript as that class on your transcript," said Eckhout.

Most of the time students don't know what they need to do in order to graduate. "Students think ... that we do it automatically. And we don't; we encourage you two terms prior to thinking you are graduating to put in that petition for graduation. Don't strictly rely on the academic evaluation because many times we have to make some adjustments there," said Eckhout.

You need to have at least a 2.0 GPA and a 24-credit residency to get your degree from CCC. No fee is associated with petitioning to graduate and it is vital that you fill out and turn in the form for petitioning, available under "forms" in your myClackamas account. It takes eight weeks to receive the diploma in the mail.

If you are looking for information on transferring your credits and how they will appear at your next school, go to [depts.clackamas.edu/advising/Transferto-yearSchools.aspx](http://depts.clackamas.edu/advising/Transferto-yearSchools.aspx).

## Praises sung for 'Home'

By Mandie Gavitt  
Associate Arts & Culture Editor

Jodi Picoult is well known for entertaining readers while dealing with heated topics through her novels. In fact, that's exactly what her readers expect from her. Picoult, never one to disappoint, wooed readers once again with her newest novel "Sing You Home."

In this new book, Picoult introduces Zoe and Max Baxter, a couple desperately trying to conceive. They seemed to have finally gotten their wish, but their hopes are dashed when Zoe miscarries. Their marriage is then torn apart by their loss. Max finds hope by joining an Evangelical church while Zoe deals with the miscarriage and divorce by throwing herself into work as a music therapist.

Zoe begins working with a suicidal teen at a local high school where she meets Vanessa. Vanessa is a high school counselor that happens to be homosexual. Zoe is surprised to find herself falling in love with Vanessa but discovers she can't help herself. She and Vanessa wed in Massachusetts. After the wedding, Zoe and Vanessa discuss the possibility of using the embryos Zoe and Max had previously stored in their attempts to have a baby. However, to use the embryos they must ask for Max's permission. Max responds with a lawsuit.

"Sing You Home" moves much more slowly than past Picoult novels, but this is not necessarily a negative thing. It allows for more time to get to know the characters involved and their distinct voices. The presentation of realistic characters is accomplished largely in part by Picoult's amazing amount of research.

During a recent public reading in Portland, Picoult explained that while researching for the book she spoke to the company Focus on the Family to get a better understanding of the Christian perspective on gay marriage and later took things that were said in the interview to create the dialogue of some of her religious characters. The devotion to better research shows in her writing as the characters are given a clear voice and the opinions of those represented are accurately shown.

The story Picoult tells in "Sing You Home" is engaging. Many times I found myself unable to put it down. However, one of the most interesting things about the novel is that it comes with a soundtrack.

According to Picoult, this new idea stemmed from the fact that she wanted to give Zoe a more tangible voice outside of the text. Because the character was a music therapist she thought music would be the best way to do so. Picoult enlisted Ellen Wilber to assist her in making the soundtrack. Picoult wrote the lyrics to songs which were then set to music and sung by Wilber.

Each chapter is represented by a track on the CD. The music is simplistic but beautiful, with Wilber singing and playing guitar. Possibly my favorite song is "Ordinary Life" in which the reader hears Zoe asking poignant questions about what makes being a homosexual "wrong." She describes how her life is actually simple and ordinary, the only thing that makes it out of the norm is people's reactions to her sexuality.

The idea of a book coming with a soundtrack is rather interesting, and I believe Picoult did an excellent job of utilizing this idea. As someone who loves both books and music, I enjoyed having the CD along with the book. Having a character with a voice you can physically hear adds a special touch to the story and I wish more books came with music accompanying it.

I highly recommend everyone grab a copy of "Sing You Home." Picoult's ability to tackle hard issues with an enlightening story makes the book a good read.